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day lavished their skill on the carving of table legs, with the result that the pier-table became an objective point of interest and occupied greatly the attention of connoisseurs. Some of these tables were of bronze, some had feet of copper or bronze, and all were carved in high relief with medallions, and ribbons, and wreaths of flowers.

This age applied textiles to every devisable use. The Gobelin and all tapestry, were woven to imitate pictures, whose subjects were fables, mythology and love. Chairs, sofas, cushions, screens, walls, all were of pictured tapestry framed in gold.

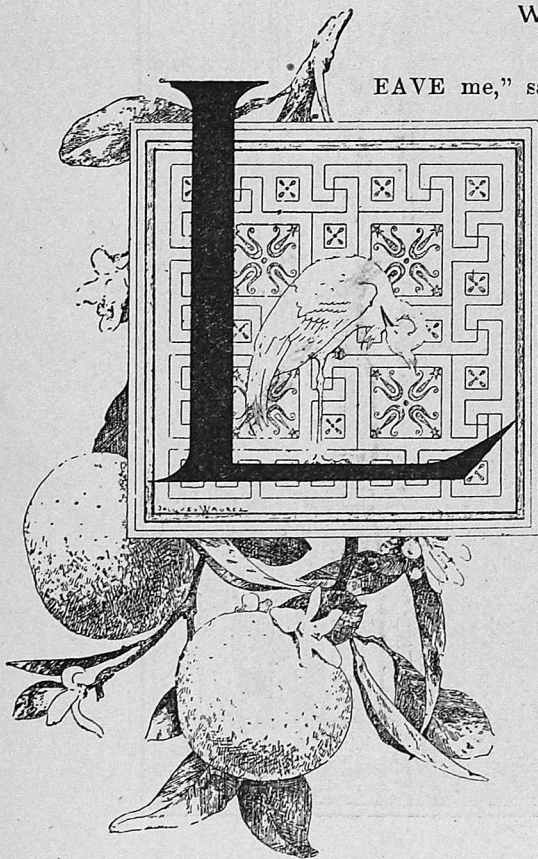
As to marquetry a nice distinction must be made. That of ebony and shell, so fashionable in the age preceding, was abandoned and wood veneering took its place, perfectly expressing the insincerity of the period. Happily, veneering is not an essential element of the style, and no one will care to revive it. Lacquer, both Japanese and French, was in vogue, and was applied both to furniture and walls.

White and gold, so much in favor at present, are Louis Quinze colors—if I may call them colors—and easily suggest a selection of Louis Quinze forms to embody them.

Some study of the essential elements of the style will be more profitable to those interested in furnishing than an observation of promiscuous examples, as in imitation the defects are often exaggerated and the real thought overlooked.

When original artists in America consent to give attention to designs for furniture, as did the French artists of the Eighteenth century, we shall have a style perfectly expressing the needs and tastes of our modern life. Until then the Louis Quinze school will continue to be the fountain-head from which to choose motives, and our judgment will continue to be restricted to selecting between its rococo excesses and its essential beauties. The only alternative is the Eastlake school, from which there is at present a revolt.

#### WALL-PAPER.



"LEAVE me," said a New York wall-paper manufacturer to the writer. "Wall-paper is too big a subject for me to talk about at present, and you had better come around some day when I'm not particularly busy, and I'll then tell you all you want to know."

"There is no time like the present," replied the writer, and I only wish to occupy you long enough to answer a few questions on the subject."

"Well, what do you want me to tell you?" said he.

"I wish to know," said the writer, "how wall-paper compares with the other methods of mural decoration, such as fresco painting, stereochrome, distemper, or oil painting?"

"It compares with them in this way," replied he, "that all the old systems of mural decoration have been practically destroyed by wall-paper. Wall papers are made in every variety, from the

cheapest blank to the finest conceptions of living artists, marvelously produced, and when a man can carry the entire frescoing of a palace in a hand wagon, ready for application to the walls, he possesses a power that is indisputable."

"Where do you say wall-paper first originated?"

"Wall-paper was originally made in China and Japan, and was produced in small squares for mural application. But wall-paper, as we know it, is a French idea, and was invented in Paris about the year 1730. Wall-paper manufactured in a continuous machine-made roll is an American idea, and was the invention of Josiah Bumstead, of Boston, about the year 1835. The history of wall-paper is in a sense a history of modern civilization. Every decorative craze has been reproduced by paper-hangings, and a century and a half of decorative art has been recorded on the emblazoned tissues of the wall-paper manufacturer."

"What do you mean by stating that the history of wall-paper is a history of modern civilization?" queried the writer.

"Well, I'll tell you," said the manufacturer. "The father of the wall paper industry was Reveillon, who established the first wall-paper factory in Rouen, in 1789. Zuber, Jacquemart, Defour, Limon, Delicourt, Madère, Defossé and Duptain were the more famous successors to Reveillon during the period 1790 to 1860. The designs on French wall-papers have underwent seve-

ral historical changes in harmony with the history of the country itself. During the period 1730 to 1785 the designs were Louis the XV. and Louis XVI., which reproduced the drapery, upholstery, cornices, carvings, etc., of the times. There were many set scenes for panels of a pastoral or romantic character. An ideal school of designers outlined shepherds and shepherdesses of the Watteau type, and scenes from the popular novels of Les Incas and Paul and Virginia. Those were the halcyon days of the French nobility, who reveled in scenes representing Oriental interiors, Brazilian forests, Swiss and Chinese compositions, and imaginative occurrences in fabulous countries. The second period of wall-paper belongs to the Revolutionary period. The pictures were stern and classical; the shepherdesses were gone. It was as much as the designer's life was worth to produce a design in Louis XVI. style. The nation revelled in the Roman toga, the consular fasces, the licitor's axe and the cap of Liberty. The escutcheons were symbols of "liberty," "equality," "fraternity," "law," "justice" and "peace" were adored. Robespierre and his associates were the true designers of that period, and their favorite color was carmine. This period of design was followed by that of the First Empire. On the wall-paper of this period were represented the battle of Austerlitz, the Pyramids of Egypt, fights between brigands and Roman carabineers, dances on the Bay of Naples, the story of Psyche and other mythological events, hunting scenes and such like. Napoleon was the designer of the period, which in turn was followed by that of the Louis Philippe regime and the revival of Gothic subjects. Scenes from the novels of Scott and Hugo were popular, and romantic life was worshipped anew, and there was no end of mediæval castles, troubadours, hawking and hunting scenes, knights in armor, and the reproduction of costly tapestries. Heraldic symbols, architectural ornaments, floral conceits, columns, balustrades, vases, etc., were the proper things for mural decoration. Then followed the fac-simile or present era in wall-papers. The human figure is absent, and we are shown imitations of velvets, damasks, tapestries, etc. The imitation is in no sense a disparagement of the wall-paper. It is a transformation of the more costly fabrics into a cheaper material. The finest decorative fabrics of all ages, the costly housings of antiquity, the priceless tapestries of the middle ages and of modern times, the most precious tissues of China and Japan, the finest silks and brocades, the emblazoned leathers of Spain and Hungary—anything and everything, whether moulded, carved, diapered, plushed, felted, burnished or embossed—have been reproduced in all their splendor in paper, the most convenient and cheapest of all vehicles for fixing such beauty to the wall."

"What about the history of wall-paper in this country?"

"In the United States wall paper first came into use about 1769. We read of Washington and La Fayette themselves hanging imported paper on the walls of the banquet hall of Mount Vernon. In 1789, Plunkett Heeson established a wall paper factory in Philadelphia. A few years afterwards Josiah Bumstead began to manufacture wall paper goods in Boston. Prior to 1835 all paper-hangings were made by hand in square sheets, Chinese fashion, necessitating their being pasted together afterwards. In that year the firm of Josiah Bumstead & Son are credited with inventing a machine to print wall-paper in one color, which, though crude, was a vast improvement on the hand process for rapid work. This necessitated the use of a continuous strip of paper, and these two ideas completely revolutionized the wall-paper trade. In 1839 the same firm invented an improved machine to print in four colors, which was a great improvement on the first machine, and could turn out 200 rolls a day. An idea of the vast improvements made since then in printing machines can be obtained by contemplating a twelve-color machine that turns out 5,000 rolls a day. Of course the idea of printing wall-paper by machinery led to the establishment of quite a number of factories about the year 1840. Mr. A. Harwood started a factory in Carmine Street, New York, in 1838, and, in 1844, R. Prince had a factory in Pearl Street, near Burling Slip. In 1840 Philadelphia had five factories, established by John Bellrose, Blanchard & Curry, Howell Brothers, Longstreth & Sons, and Isaac Pugh. The firm of Howell Brothers is still in existence, and owns perhaps the largest wall-paper factory in the world. In 1840 Joseph Barry started a factory in Worcester, Mass. After various changes in the style of the firm and location of the factory, the firm, in 1859, became Bigelow, Hayden & Co., and the factory was located in Roxbury, Mass., where business was done up to 1877. In 1855 the firm of Christy & Constant was established in New York, Mr. Christy having originally started a factory, in 1835, in Poughkeepsie. The business, under various changes of the firm, continued up to 1887, when, on the break-up of the last pool, operations were suspended and the plant was sold."

"I suppose the business at present has attained enormous proportions?"

"The business since 1840 has steadily increased in growth and importance. In 1840 the output of all the American factories was 2,000,000 rolls; in 1850, 15,000,000 rolls; in 1860, 30,000,000 rolls; in 1870, 45,000,000 rolls; in 1880, 65,000,000 rolls; in 1890, 100,000,000 rolls. Since 1887 a free competition among the manu-



## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

facturers has caused ten factories to suspend operations, but there are still over thirty factories engaged in active business whose combined output is more than sufficient for the wants of the trade."

"Don't you think the rapid and cheap multiplication of decorative effect of nobler substances will cheapen the whole business of decoration by the mere surfeit of wall-papers?" said the writer.

"There is no doubt," said the manufacturer, "that in the cheaper grades of paper there are meretricious and vulgar designs, the result of catering to a cheap market, and to the craze for everlasting novelty in the way of patterns. There are exaggerated and capricious patterns with lurid contrasts of color originated by the manufacturer to create in his customer a desire for something that is all the rage, and fashion instead of the love of good decoration is appealed to. But ignoring the offensively cheap papers, there are grades of wall-paper having designs that produce a refined, physical and mental enjoyment. Unlike other costly forms of art which exist only for a few, wall-paper exists for all, and the man of moderate means may surround himself with all that is artistic in design and color. The decorator has at last largely convinced the age that cold and dreary walls are unfit surroundings for civilized beings. Men imbibe enough poverty of imagination and depression of spirits in the dark stairways and grim interiors of city workshops without coming home to feed their minds on a similar diet."

"But don't you think that your ready-made paper imitations of marble, metal, ivory, wood, plaster, leather, tiles, velvets, brocades, damask, fresco painting, mosaics and carving is a species of deception that destroys any artistic pleasure in your products?"

"No, sir, I don't agree with you. There is no pretence in wall-paper. It does not, or cannot, counterfeit the original substance, but rather the effect first produced by the substance it is supposed to represent. It is a legitimate step in decoration to popularize art by reproducing in a simple and less costly fabric the richer and more costly decorations that are beyond the reach of all, except persons of great wealth. Thus, leather paper simply reproduces the value of the embossing, coloring and gilding, first employed on real leather, and by so doing the resources of paper have been developed. As well blame the Japanese artist for carving costly ivory in imitation of cheap bamboo, as blame the wall-paper manufacturer for producing papers that give the effect of decorated leather in decorated paper."

"I will admit that wall-paper is the cheapest of all vehicles of the beautiful, and any one who considers its modern development will be surprised at its æsthetic resources."

"My dear sir, there are superb creations in American, English and French wall-papers that rival anything hitherto produced for mural decoration. There are papers whose design and coloring give magnificence to the mind that contemplates them. There is no end to the variety of designs and colors at the disposal of a consummate artist, and no conception is too difficult to be reproduced by the accurate machinery of the manufacturer."

"Your process of printing is conducted by means of rollers having the design cover the surface, I believe?"

"Yes, in printing paper by machinery a roller is used, which, as far as the designer is concerned, is simply a square block bent into a circular form for rapid and automatic work. The designer must apply his pattern within the limits of the surface of his roller, which is six inches in diameter and eighteen, twenty or twenty-two inches wide. The length of his repeat depends on the diameter of the roller and its width on the length of same.

The pattern may entirely cover the surface thereof, or it may be contained in a square, diamond, hexagon, or ogee, unit so small that two or more units are required to cover the width of the paper. But whether large or small, the unit of design or repeat is the important point. It is a mechanical necessity that gives rise to all geometric patterns whether woven or printed, and this necessity is based not only upon the laws of decorative design for covering large surfaces, but also on the laws of commerce which demand a cheaply made article as the price of universal use."

"Do you mean to say that every possible variety of ornament must be wholly contained within a small repeating unit?"

"It does not matter what may be the amount or character of the ornament, whether scroll, foliage, arabesque, geometrical device, or animal figure, the unit of subdivision is not affected thereby. It is wonderful how few these skeletons of repeating designs are, and yet more wonderful still the endless elaboration of ornament that can be produced by such simple means, the only limit being that of the genius of the designer. The triangle and its duplications, such as the hexagon and star, the circle, the square and diamond, the scale pattern (as on fishes), the feather pattern (as on birds) and the ogee, or onion-shaped, pattern complete the list of units, yet from such forms with their inter-sections and derivations an endless wealth of ornament has been created."

"I suppose, with certain exceptions, the more the unit is hidden the more artistic becomes the decoration."

"You are right, for although tied down to a rigid geometrical space, it is to the credit of the designer to see his work appear absolutely free of the prim restriction of his allotted unit."

"When the design is produced on paper, by what method do you reproduce it on the roller?"

"The designer," he replied, "having fixed upon his unit of design, and filled it with his ornament, transfers a tracing of the same to the surfaces of as many rollers as there are colors in the design. He then takes his colors, and paints only the red parts of the design on one roller, the blue parts on another, the green on another, etc., and hands the rollers to the block-cutters. The design on each roller is built up by little pieces of brass driven into the wood by a hammer, and where a solid surface is required the brass outline is filled up with felt firmly glued in. When all this is done the roller is put into a lathe, and finished into a cylinder of equal diameter throughout. The modern wall-paper printing machine consists of a large cylinder wheel, around which is carried the continuous roll of paper. The various rollers are fixed at intervals around the cylinder wheel and placed so as to press against the paper being printed by them. Each roller prints its own fraction of the design, being inked from its own trough of pulp color, and in this way the whole four, five or more colors are simultaneously printed on the paper."

"It must be a splendid exhibition of human ingenuity to see the paper passing through the machine."

"You must come into the factory and see the machines at work. A single sweep of the wheels transforms the blank paper to a thing of beauty, glowing with all the colors of the perfect design. Sometimes as many as twelve colors will be employed, but it would be just as easy to print one hundred colors as one; it is only a question of size in the machine. It is a modern illustration of Minerva springing fully armed from the head of Jove. Were it not an every day occurrence, wall-paper printing would be considered a marvelous thing."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

